

DISASTER DECLARATIONS 101



What does a disaster declaration mean?

A disaster declaration is a tool that allows the federal government to provide resources at the state and local level.

Is there more than one type of disaster declaration?

Yes, there are many different types of disaster declarations. Here are some types of disaster declarations that we commonly see in coastal Louisiana:

- ▶ Major Disaster
- ▶ Emergency
- ▶ Fisheries Disaster
- ▶ Agricultural Disaster

Can one event trigger more than one type of disaster declarations?

Absolutely.

The President just declared an emergency disaster declaration and it does not say anything about fisheries. Am I left out?

No. Emergency disaster declarations and fishery disaster declarations are two different things. The emergency disaster declaration usually comes first. It allows the federal government to support state and local efforts to get people out of harm's way and minimize property damage. These are often issued before the emergency actually happens. It gives emergency responders additional resources to prepare for the anticipated disaster. Depending on the scope of the disaster, these declarations may be amended or expanded after the event to provide additional resources.

Fisheries disasters are different. A fishery disaster declaration request requires information on all of the impacted fish stocks and details about the causes and impacts to those fisheries. Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) provides that information to NOAA. NOAA then evaluates all of the information before deciding whether or not to declare a fisheries disaster. Because this process is more detailed than the request for an emergency disaster declaration, it can take longer to be declared.

What happens when a fishery disaster is declared?

Congress may appropriate funds for disaster relief. There is not a standing fund for fisheries disasters. If Congress makes fishery disaster funds available, NOAA Fisheries will coordinate the distribution of funds with the State.

What types of relief may be available?

This will depend on the terms of the declaration. Fishery disasters may qualify for relief under the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) and/or the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (IFA). Types of relief range from grants to states to direct assistance to fisherman and businesses. The types of relief available will depend on which provisions of the law are triggered by the disaster declaration.